MARCH 1958

The Reformed Journal

A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT AND OPINION

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BOOK REVIEWS

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Sabbath to Saturday

by Lester DeKoster

TWEEN Good Friday and Easter Sunday came Sabbath Day, the quiescent day.

t was the "middle" day, the almost forgotten of Eastertide. What did the disciples do, nned, frightened, scattered, alone? How little re they capable even of scheming to steal His y away. It was still the Sabbath, the shadow an old dispensation about to give way to the ality from which all shadows flee. It was the bolic day, *token* of peace, quiet, joy, commu-n. His followers found it empty, disquieting, aningless after the awful events of the day be-e.

ow much do we all live in such "middle" days? God has so arranged the chronometry of our s," wrote James Martineau, "that there are ay leaden, ticking minutes between the golden, king hours." How often do we find it so?

ven the "masters" of the mystical life, Dean e tells us, received the beatific vision but rarely, ugh they sought it patiently upon their knees. l how is it, then, with us who have, or give, less e to seeking the "presence of God"?

re not our days, then, often "middle" days, n-drum, ordinary, far-from-home days? Are not, indeed, "Sabbath" days in which we seek symbol and ignore the reality, clutch the seen lose the unseen? How often do we not grope dly among the shadows, snuffing out the spirit n the letter?

nd yet . . . .

nough we be neither mystics nor masters of a tineau's pen, what has God done to "the chro-etry of our lives"? Have not the "Sabbaths" me "Saturdays"?

ehold, the veil was rent and graves yawned on that black Friday; and after that "middle" came "early on the first day of the week" that ing light which struck the faithless blind even t rolled the shadows up as a vesture discarded. symbols were received up into the Reality, and "middle" day passed into *Day*.

No longer stunned and afraid, the handful of His followers overthrew principalities, and powers, and dominions. No longer in despair, they breathed hope into the world; no longer weak, they exuded power; no longer enslaved to symbols, they dwelt in glorious freedom; no longer alone, their risen Lord lived in them.

And all this can be for us, too.

Yes, many of our days are "Sabbaths" still, the tasteless, colorless "middle" days, when we go hungry and thirsty in the midst of God's plenty. But it is not necessarily so.

For the "middle" days will come, but can be "Saturdays" now: that is, can be only the dark hours before the dawn, only preludes to the "early in the morning" *which can be any time now!* For the leaden minutes may be shattered by the golden notes of risen hope, may be transmuted into joy by the alchemy of Love. Have we but ears to hear, and hearts to understand, the hum-drum tasks glow in reflected glory, the symbols are sacramentalized in service, and through the darkness pierces the eternal Light.

For Easter has come, and He is risen! And we need no longer seek the living among the dead.

This, this is what I love, and what is this?
I asked the beautiful earth, who said, "Not I."
I asked the depths, and the immaculate sky.
And all the spaces said, "Not he but his."
And so, like one who scales a precipice,
Height after height I scaled the flaming book
Of the great universe, yea passed o'er all
The world of thought, which so much higher is.
Then I exclaimed, "To whom is mute all murmur
Of phantasy, of nature and of art,
He than articulate language hears a firmer
And grander meaning in his own deep heart,
No sound from cloud or angel." Oh, to win
That voiceless voice, "My servant, enter in."

(Archbishop Trench, after Augustine)

And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre . . . .

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said.

Matthew 27:59-61; 28:5, 6 (ASV)

Devotional Reading

by Mildred Zylstra

In his book *Doors Into Life,* Douglas Steere says:

> We live in a season when the prospects for the Christian religion in the Western world seem grim indeed. Secularism, which is the living of life as though God were dead, as though He did not exist, has gone so far in Europe that even the mark of being Christian states has been dropped in country after country.
>
> In ourselves, the seeds of the same mood that has brought this about daily become more and more evident. We see this secularist mood growing in education, in marriage, in the family, and even in the most intimate presuppositions of personal life. In public affairs we see it at work de-personalizing our sense of responsibility for our neighbors and delegating this responsibility to impersonal concentrations of public power which make decisions with little or no reference to the life or law of God . . . .
>
> In times such as these, God can use as his servants only men and women who can be trusted to be loyal to the core to Him and to His cause. This is a kind of loyalty no congressional committee can ever ascertain . . . Over the centuries this loyalty to God has been called devotion, and it is a good name and we might well keep it. For devotion, which is a derivative of the Latin word for *to vow,* means to yield oneself, to commit oneself, to consecrate oneself to the object of devotion. . . .
>
> History has shown that literature that can be classed as devotional is among the most effective stimulants of this life of devotion to God.

Most of us will acknowledge the truth of these words. We agree with those who tell us that we should spend some of our time reading devotional literature. But as the *Imitation of Christ* points out, "There are many persons who desire the contemplative life, but they will not practice the things which lead to it."

One reason for this neglect, perhaps, is the difficulty of finding good books of devotional literature. Too many of the books on the market are superficial. Too many of the current ones put the main emphasis on the "positive power of thinking."

Doors Into Life is not a new publication — it was published by Harper and Brothers in 1948 — but it deserves special attention. In this book Douglas Steere discusses five classics of devotional literature and illuminates them for the ordinary reader. He says of them:

> These books span six centuries and have sprung from widely separated religious confessions: The *Imitation of Christ* from the new devotional movement of the late fourteenth-century Dutch Christianity; de Sales' *Introduction to the Devout Life* from the sixteenth-century Catholic Renaissance; Woolman's *Journal* from colonial American Quakerism; Kierkegaard's *Purity of Heart* from nineteenth-century Scandinavian Lutheranism; and Baron von Hugel's *Lett* from a Roman Catholic thinker of our own cent whose influence on Anglo-Saxon Protestant thou was exceeded by no one in his generation. Yet th books rise above their centuries and above their con sions in the universal authority with which they spe to our condition today.

Here and there in the book practices are co mended to the reader which will grate upon sensibilities because they are strange to his o tradition, or because they are dated by the centu in which the book was written. If the differe approaches to the great realities do not all se equally good to any one reader he may find co fort in the words of Francis de Sales addressed some nuns in Paris as he was commenting on work of certain spiritual advisers: "I respect th method, but it is not mine." Many, however, w experience the truth of T. S. Eliot's remark — th we may find companions in men of other centur who are nearer to us than most of our own co temporaries — as they read one or the other these great books.

Each devotional classic is introduced by a d cussion of its place in the material and spirit world as it then existed and as it now is. Th because it is impossible to separate a great bo from its author, some helpful personal notes abo the man are given. Much of the time the auth speak for themselves. Douglas Steere's own su gestions and lucid comments on the significa to the individual of certain passages accompa the quotations. There is, however, no thought substituting "interpretation" for the original its Steere's purpose is to encourage others to ma the reading of the originals a part of the pract of each day's life, to the end that their prayer may become more meaningful.

The author's purpose, I repeat, is to send reader back to the books themselves. The b summary of what these books are about is giv in the Introduction:

> The *Imitation of Christ* lays bare the cross and keep bare; the *Introduction to the Devout Life* is a book nursery exercises for a nursery-school beginner private prayer and in the agile service of God; J Woolman's *Journal* unites the life of prayer and wors and social concern and is a never-ending renewer of faith that Jesus meant us to take literally the words the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be d *on earth* as it is in heaven"; *Purity of Heart* is the that is laid at the root of the barren fig tree to rem it that after the reprieve that was granted it to pe

of one more dunging, if there is still no fruit, it will be removed; von Hugel's *Letters* are a witness to the great health of the religious life that embraces every phase of our being: the mind, the will, the emotions, as embodied in the sweep of affection and concern of this noble Christian.

FOUR of these books are readily available. Douglas Steere begins his discussions with the *Imitation of Christ,* and this is a good choice. The *Imitation* is available in various editions, and has universal appeal. Fifteen minutes daily reading of this classic may open doors into a richer spiritual life, for the purpose of all devotional books is to strengthen our prayer life and lead us into closer communion with God.

Baron von Hugel's book is difficult to obtain. His letters on suffering might form a classic on the subject. I quote them at lenght because, to use an old Quaker phrase, they "speak to my condition":

. . as to how you are, not simply, once for all, at the beginning of all this discomfort and pain, to accept and will it; but (as you most rightly feel, a very different thing) how you are to stand it, to keep on accepting it, day by day, even hour by hour, possibly minute by minute . . . let me suggest to you the following. . . . All we can then do is gently to drop, gently to try to drop, all foresight whatsoever; to treat the question how we are going to stand this for a month, or a week, or even a day, or even an hour, as a little presumption on our part. We cannot really, of ourselves, "stand" it properly, for half an hour; and God will and does give us His grace to stand it, for as long as ever He chooses, provided we will, according to the intensity of the trial, contract our outlook, to the day, or the hour, or even the minute. God, the essentially timeless, will thus and then help His poor timeful creature to contract time to a point of most fruitful faith and love.

. . only Christianity has taught us the true peace and unction of suffering. The Stoics tried the hopeless little game of denying its objective reality, or of declaring it a good in itself (which it never is), and the Pessimists tried to revel in it as a food to their melancholy and as something that can no more be transformed than it can be avoided or explained. But Christ came and He did not really explain it: He did far more, He met it, willed it, transformed it, and He taught us how to do all this, or rather He himself does it within us, if we do not hinder His all-healing hands.

Whatever your need may be, you will find something in one of these five books that will speak to your condition.

Steere says that these books of devotional literature have been "doors into life" for him. He is well qualified to speak of the spiritual life. He is the author of *Prayer and Worship* and other books. He became professor of philosophy at Haverford College in 1941, he has lectured on devotional literature at Union Theological Seminary, has conducted retreats, and has traveled in Europe for the American Friends Service Committee.

These five devotional classics can be entrances into a larger life for others also. For these books "are rare combinations of convicting and of kindling power, convicting us of sin and of the dead areas that need attacking and on the other hand encouraging us and whetting our hunger to abandon ourselves more completely to obedience to God."

"We Protestants do not make enough of religious exercises," Henry Zylstra says in *Testament of Vision.* "We cannot come in from a week of calls, committees, affairs, and business, look at the church calendar, find the question and answer of the Catechism that is due for Sunday, proceed to the pulpit, and make something of it. We need the spiritual nurture of prayer, reading, reflection, and leisure." All of us, laymen as well as ministers, need the spiritual nurture of prayer, reading and reflection.

Lent, the forty days before Easter, is the season in which thoughtful reading is particularly called to our attention. A pattern of reading begun in Lent could profitably be extended across the seasons and the years. Père Jean Grou has given a good description of devotion when he says that it "is not a thing that passes, which comes and goes as it were, but it is something habitual, fixed, permanent which extends over every instant of life, and regulates all our conduct. It is to this mature devotion to God that good devotional literature would lead us."

From a Sermon by John Calvin on The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, delivered Easter Day, on which the Holy Supper of our Lord was celebrated.

"Here is the table which He has prepared for us. And to what purpose? It is not to satisfy our bodies and our bellies, although even in that God declares that He has a fatherly care for us, and our Lord Jesus Christ shows that truly He is the life of the world. If we take daily our rest and food, even in that our Lord Jesus Christ declares to us His goodness. But He shows a special consideration in this table which is set for us here, for it is to show us that we are brothers of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is to say that as He united us to Himself (as He says in the seventeenth chapter of St. John) He has also united us to God His Father, and fully declares to us that He is our meat and drink, that we are fed with His own substance to have all our spiritual life in Him. And that is more than it would be if He called us His brothers a hundred times.

"So then, let us realize the unity that we have with our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, He is willing to have a common life with us, and that what He has may be ours, even that He wishes to dwell in us, not in imagination, but in fact; not in an earthly, but in a spiritual manner; and in any case, that He so works by the power of His Holy Spirit that we are united to Him more than are the members of a body. And just as the root of a tree sends its substance and its power through all branches, so we draw substance and life from our Lord Jesus Christ."

Reformed Theology and the First Amendment

by Leonard Verduin

THE FIRST AMENDMENT of the Constitution of the United States provides, *inter alia*, that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . ." What are we to think of this Amendment? That is, what are we to think of it *as Christians* who take the Word of God seriously?

If, as one hears it said these days, "neutral organizations serve the cause of antichrist," must not a Christian withhold his approval from this Amendment that binds our government to a "neutral" position? Nay more, must we then not agitate for a repudiation of the Frist Amendment and for the writing of a new and non-neutral Amendment? Are the Reformed Presbyterians perhaps right when they maintain that as long as the government does not acknowledge the kingship of Christ a Christian cannot and may not in good conscience participate in that government, even to the extent of going to the polls? And if the Reformed Presbyterians are wrong in this point, as the rest of the Reformed camp seems to hold, then on what score are they in error? May a person who declares that "neutral organizations serve the devil" go through the formalities of becoming a citizen of these United States, formalities that include a solemn promise made before God to uphold the Constitution, the First Amendment being included? We are mindful that some of those who go through these formalities, the while condemning "neutral organizations," seek to rationalize their policy by taking recourse to a distinction made between societies which one joins voluntarily and societies one finds himself in willy-nilly. Surely this distinction (even if it were a valid distinction) does the *immigrant* no good; for it is definitely a matter of choice for him to become or not to become a citizen of a State that does not constitutionally acknowledge the kingship of Christ. He is a *joiner*.

Let no one think that the First Amendment is not a radical and revolutionary thing. It is that. By this legislation an end is made, in one fell stroke, to an epoch in the civilization of man and a new era is ushered in. The First Amendment makes an end to the confessing State of pre-modern times and brings in the non-confessing State to take its place. The First Amendment marks the final end of medieval culture and announces the beginning of modern culture. So radical a thing is this that no human institution is left untouch By it, for instance, marriage is made a secular stitution, one to which the churches may, if t see fit, add afurther dimension. Burial, too, und goes a similar transformation. It is, of course, at all strange that they who quarrel with the i of "neutrality" *überhaupt* will also evince a n talgic hankering after the pre-modern delineat of the institution of marriage and marriage c emony.

Naturally a world of theology is at once involv in so radical a matter. Theological considerati of the first magnitude are at once implicated. A it is time we spend some of the best hours of c working day on these matters. Certain tensions the Christian Reformed Church seem to us to hand in hand with a diversity of opinion as to wh a Reformed person is to think of the First Ame ment. This article intends to put in focus a f of the issues that underlie these tensions.

FIRST of all a few words in general about be "neutral." It should be evident that neutral is sometimes wrong and sometimes right; and t non-neutrality is sometimes wrong and sometim right. Neutrality is wrong in those cases wh non-neutrality is enjoined and in them only. T question always is, What does God ask? If He a non-neutrality, it is sinful for us to be neutral; if He asks neutrality, as we think He sometim does, then non-neutrality is sinful. The quest that needs to be faced is, What does God ask of t State, His creature? If he asks neutrality, th the First Amendment is right in His sight. If asks non-neutrality, then it is wrong in His sig And in that eventuality we Christians had bet try to do something about it.

Next a few comments on the First Amen ment's "neutrality." It should be pointed out th the "neutrality" of the First Amendment is bet called impartiality. The First Amendment w written to prevent favoritism, devised to ke Congress from giving to one religiosity the rig of-way and so put the other religiosities at a d advantage. The First Amendment does not inte to commit America to religious vacuity, as is som times imagined. It does not commit America secularism, as is sometimes said. It does not se or anticipate the cessation of religious commitme

the part of its citizens. In fact, it not only ex-cts them to continue to have such commitments it it seeks to provide a climate where religious mmitment is most likely to flourish. It does this providing that every religious conviction shall ve the same status at law, the same protection, e same opportunity. The intention of the First mendment is not to carve out an anti-Christian anti-religious State. As far as the Constitution concerned America is not, and cannot become, "godless America." There may be godless people America — we have our share of them — but ere is no "godless America." A godless State is non-neutral State. It precludes religion and the ee exercise thereof, things which in the American ate are guaranteed by constitutional provision. ot only is this the theoretical intent of the First mendment; it is likewise the practice. Any one no is in position to speak with authority on the atter knows that on the American scene religion d the free exercise thereof are not obstructed but couraged — within the framework of the First mendment, of course.

We do not wish to say or imply that the "Amer-an experiments," as our attempt at neutralism sometimes called, solves all existing problems. e are mindful of the fact that it raises some new oblems. But all in all we think the "American periment" is *working*. And we feel that this is cause it has God's approval.

In any case, we can understand that our Amer-an neutralism has the love and devotion of our ld-timers," a love and devotion new-comers may d it hard to understand. Our forefathers heaved sigh of deep relief and thanked God when they rived, a century ago, on the shores of the New orld and experienced for the first time the ben-ts of the First Amendment. There was profound atitude in *de kolonie* for an impartial govern-ent; for they had suffered much at the hands of government that was still sufficiently medieval be non-impartial in matters of religion, a gov-nment that took sides in an issue in which it had business taking sides. And we, the great-grand-ildren of the "Pilgrim Fathers of the West," as r ancestors are wont to be called, sing with all e verve of which we are capable: "God of our thers. . . . Thy love divine had led us in the past; this free land by Thee our lot was cast"! (Psal-r-Hymnal No. 462). Let no one suspect us of ging enthusiasm therefore if we arch our eye-ows at every attempt to re-introduce on these ores an outmoded medievalism. We have no quar-l with "neutrality" on certain levels. We are of e opinion that non-neutrality on the level of the ate is an evil, a violation of God's revealed will. on-neutrality where neutrality is enjoined is st as vicious as neutrality where non-neutrality commanded.

IF IMPARTIALITY on the part of the State is not only permissible but actually in keeping with God's will, then there must be a theology upon which such impartiality rests. Do we have such a theology? We think we do have — in the doctrine of God's common grace. Although the doctrine of common grace is still largely a tract of virgin territory, one that calls for frontiersmen of great stamina and strength, we feel that the main lines of this doctrine are already visible. The brush has been cleared sufficiently so that we may see the sunlight and the soil. We wish to put forth an exploring foot upon this terrain.

It will perhaps be granted by all that the State results from God's common grace. Now if that be granted then it follows that the rule-right that comes to expression in the State is not of a piece with the rule-right that expresses itself in the area of God's special or redeeming grace. We may put this in mathematical formula. The rule-right of the State is to the rule-right on the redemptive level what common grace is to special grace. Just as it is a serious fault to deal with common grace and special grace without further distinction, so is it quite erroneous to talk about rule-right without further differentiation.

One rule-right exercises itself over willing subjects; the other rule-right is operative without the consent of the ruled. For this reason there is coercion in the one and not in the other. The sword is the symbol of the rule-right that evinces itself in the State; it is not a suitable symbol of the rule-right that comes to expression in the kingdom of grace.

It was a fatal error of medieval theology that it identified the one rule-right with the other.[1] The medieval sects were wholly in the right when they insisted that a Fall occurred when in the days of the emperor Constantine "the sword of the emperor was welded to the cross of Christ." Orthodoxy enforced by the secular sword is the inevitable outcome of every failure to differentiate between rule-right and rule-right. All the burnings, the garrotings, the hangings, the drownings, were the result of a mistaken theology as to rule-right. And the time is still very far off when Christianity shall have lived down the sad consequences of the medieval failure to differentiate between rule-right and rule-right. It may indeed be asked whether this old error is not coming to contemporary expression when we hear Matthew 28:18 (the saying that "All power has been given to me . . .") quoted and applied without due regard for the fact that

1. This basic error at times led to well-nigh blasphemous constructions. A parallel was drawn by Peter Damian, for example, between the "mystery" of the confluence of the two natures of Christ and the "mystery" of the confluence of emperor and priest. (Cf. Migne, *Patres Lat.*, Vol. CXLV, col. 86f)

the rule-right of which Christ was speaking was his rule-right on the redemptive level, as it surely was, for it is the rule-right that warrants the program of disciple-making and baptizing. Jesus himself was very emphatic about it as he rebuked people who gave evidence of confusing the two rule-rights. He took drastic measures to rebuke those who offered to carry the sword into an area where that kind of rule-right does not belong. It would seem that our Reformed Presbyterians are not free from a certain amount of confusion at this point.

To go on: we put down still another foot on the tract of clearing of which we spoke earlier. It seems further that common grace, the kind of grace out of which the State arises, contemplates man *qua* man, without further refinement. It is indiscriminate, promiscuous, non-selective, non-differentiating. That is precisely why this grace is called *"common"* grace. Because of its omnibus character it does not take into account the distinction of believer and non-believer. In it God "makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends his rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). The context of this passage makes it doubly clear that this is the burden of this piece of Holy Writ; for the context sets itself to rebuke a policy of discrimination on the part of men, a policy of selectivity whereby "enemies" are "hated" and "neighbors" are "loved." The passage does this by contrasting such human policy, of giving here what is withheld there, with the divine policy of non-differentiation in that area where the giving of rain is situated, namely, the area of common grace.[2]

IT MAY BE asked whether an institution, in this instance the State, that has come into being by a grace of God that has non-selectivity as its characteristic feature may itself be expected to be anything else than non-disciminating. To ask the State (not the Statesman, for that is an entirely different thing) which is created by the promiscuous grace of God to address itself to the question "What think ye of the Christ?" is to inject the dimension of non-promiscuity into an area where the promiscuous grace of God is regna It would seem that that would be confusion. appears then that the State that is most nearly ter God's own heart is the State that provides law and order, and by so doing gives also to Church an opportunity to flourish, but leaves issues of special and redeeming grace to agenc other than itself, those agencies, namely, that low from God's selective grace. (In passing may point out that it is not at all strange that medie theology sloughed off completely the whole c cept of a selective grace of God, lost it so cc pletely that in Reformation times the doctrine election seemed to be a new thing? He who allc the rule-rights to coalesce will discover that promiscuousness of the one wipes off on the othe

Whenever the area of common grace is dives of its distinguishing feature, that of non-select ity, and the element of selection and discrimi tion is carried into it, then untold harm is done to the Church and its message and program special grace, too. For then the exercise of opti which is the distinguishing characteristic of grace that is operative here, is molested and c no longer be its proper self. To be specific, if State takes sides, then the challenge of the G pel has been prejudiced; the choice which m must make has in that case already been made, whole or in part, *for* him rather than *by* him. "Christian" State causes the exercise of option dwarf and disappear. It is not at all inexplica why medieval Christianity was in fact optionl Christianity, which is actually a contradiction terms. On the other hand, a "godless" State mal the exercise of option unduly difficult by injecti an obstacle that should be foreign to the situati The challenge of the Gospel should not be pre diced; a thing it is sure to be in any non-impart State. The impartial State returns this challen to its proper tensions.

The tremendous importance of this will be ident, as we wish it to be, when one reflects up the pivotal place given in our faith to the mat of option. The service of unfallen man in the g den of Eden left our God still less than complet satisfied; because it was *option-less.* Therefore Trial Command, by which option was injected i the scene. After man had fallen by a wrong of option, a system of salvation was published system of salvation in which the exercise of opti always plays a central role, a role so important a pivotal that a man cannot be a Christian witho it. If the exercise of option is indeed so integra part of the faith we proclaim, and try to live, is but natural that we seek a climate in which t option may be what it was intended to be. T First Amendment provides such a climate.

2. The writer of these lines has always felt that it is not good schematization to treat (as did the Synod in the now famous Three Points) of the "well-meant offer of salvation" under the heading of "common grace." The problem of the *bona fide* offer of salvation to all who hear is a problem concerning *the administration of special grace* rather than a problem of common grace. One of the first points made by Dr. Abraham Kuyper in his monumental work on *De Gemeene Gratie* is that common grace "does not have so much as the germ of salvation in it and for that reason is of a *totally different nature* (italics are Kuyper's) than is the case in both particular grace and Covenant grace." It would therefore be better to discuss the question of the well-meant offer of salvation not when non-redemptive grace is in focus but when redemptive grace is being treated.

It is apparent that we consider the First Amendment to be boon and not bane — precisely because its neutralism. We have come to see that the on-neutral State is a great evil. The record shows at it invariably leads to persecution of God's arest children. At all times it stultifies man by vesting him of his dearest birthright, the exercise choice. By depriving men of option or by tong men's options down, it as a result builds up a sentment in the souls of men. After it has made en do things they do not choose to do, or has ade them believe things they do not elect to beve, then it prepares the way for fearful emancition parades, such as the world witnessed in the rench Revolution. We like the neutralism of the merican State because it gives to the Christian ith an optimum opportunity to be itself. Man's sponse to the overture of the Gospel can have its oper existential dimension in the kind fo society e First Amendment provides. It can have it *only* that kind of society.

WE WISH to conclude with a few quotations. We quote first and add a few remarks afterrds. "It is of the very essence of the Gospel at it is a Divine gift of grace and election, that acceptance means free, individual response and cision and that discipleship means personal willgness to take up a cross and to follow. Once ese things are really grasped, the pluralist soty no longer presents a problem, but rather a lcome opportunity, to the orthodox believer. It eds no justification. The problem now is the ther to justify the former employment of Chrisnity as the religion of a sacral society . . . . The nsformation of Christianity itself into the estabhed religion of a sacral society for a millennium er the conversion of Constantine was an anomwhich produced many anomalies. . . . Not the st of these anomalies was the Inquisition and the rning of heretics. . . . The medieval synthesis Church and state is so impressive that we have en slow to see that it was an anomaly rather than norm. But its departure should be a matter for oicing rather than for the nostalgic regrets of e apologists of the 'Europe is the Faith' school."

Now who do you suppose wrote that? Does he e in the partly medieval society that is Europe was he fetched up in the climate of the New rld and the First Amendment? Is he a Protesnt or a Catholic?

When we inform you that he is a Catholic you sh to say at once that he must be an unusual tholic. That he is. He is an unusual Catholic ecisely because he is an American Catholic. His id occurs nowhere else. He has repudiated dievalism with its "sacral" (that is, confessing) ate. That is why he writes so acceptably. If the philosophy that comes to expression in his writings had been in vogue during the Middle Ages then a lot of things would be different today. Then there would have been no Inquisition — as our Catholic friend senses. But without an Inquisition there would have been no Protestantism in the sense of an apart-from-Rome Christianity, for then the Reformation would have gone into the channels of internal reform. Then there would have been no French Revolution and no backlog of resentment against the Church such as so commonly obstructs the Lord's work. Then there would have been no need for any First Amendment, for then the wisdom contained in it would have been axiomatic. There would also have been no occasion for the writing of the present articles.

A FINAL WORD, a brief "commercial." Where did we get this idea of an impartial State? The readers of this journal will recall that the present writer is sure that it is not to be traced back to the Reformers. They may suspect that we would look for it in the camp of "the most vilified people of history," the Anabaptists. We are grateful for space for a single bit of light from the sources. The Anabaptist Hanns Rannich was asked the stock question as to what he believed "concerning the magistracy." His reply ran: "That in the apostolic church there was a civil ruler's office is not apparent. When the apostle said that God had given 'apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers' he would have added the category of 'magistrate' if there had been such an office. . . . as to the magistracy our position is that it must be partial to neither side (*zu kainem taill parteyisch*); if it were in the signature of unregeneracy it would in all likelihood be inclined to punish the pious; if it were in the signature of the regenerate then it would . . . do the same to the unbelieving ones. . . . A ruler must be a keeper of the peace between them, a sort of wall such as a garden has, to deflect the wild beasts."

It fell to the lot of Petrus Dathenus, stalwart for the Reformed position of those times, to put this Anabaptist in his place. I dislike to quote him — for I am ashamed of him, with his: "an unheard-of invention! We read in Deuteronomy 17 that Israel had to set as king 'one *from among thy brethren.*' Here there is no reference to any wall between pious and impious, but to a 'brother,' one from among a people known as God's people. This idea of a 'between' is *out!*"

We shall have to make up our minds whether we wish to commit ourselves to the philosophy of State of this Dathenus, or of this Hanns Rannich. The writer of these lines has already made up his mind. That is why he has no quarrel with the First Amendment.

Calvin and the Philosophers (II)

by Dewey J. Hoitenga, Jr.

If *Journal* readers felt, as I did, upon reading some articles and correspondence in three of its recent issues, they perhaps agree with me that our Reformed community may be starting a new, exciting, and fruitful chapter in our perennial concern with philosophy, and more particularly, with its relation to theology and to our faith. The articles I refer to are those by Dr. J. De Boer in the February issue, "Theology and Philosophy," and in the March issue, "Notes on Theological Language"; and, in the June issue, that by Mr. C. Orlebeke, "Does Christianity Make Sense?" and that by Mr. C. Seerveld, "A Note on a School of Thought and Disciples"; together with the discussion between Dr. De Boer and Mr. Seerveld in the same issue.

If only one thing is evident from these writings, it is that the disagreement among philosophers on the nature of their science does not simply vanish when these philosophers are Christian or even Reformed. Instead, it is apparent that a dispute among philosophers in general has simply reappeared in our own community. This fact ought to caution us with regard to the sort of things that are offered as relevant in deciding the issue. It ought especially to warn us that this issue is not like those that are resolved simply by consulting our religious faith; for a certain relationship which this faith might involve is part of what is comprehended in the question.

In my previous article I invited reflection upon the facts presupposed by some questions I had discussed. The questions were: What did Calvin borrow from the teachings of the philosophers and what did he reject? Does Calvin allow for a natural theology or not? The facts these questions presuppose are, respectively, that Calvin was on some kind of terms with what the philosophers had said about God; and that natural theology is an actual science with respect to which it makes sense to ask whether Calvin allowed for it in some degree or not. These facts require an explanation. How is it possible that Calvin understands the philosophers so well, is able to use some of the things they say, and is so concerned to reject others? There would seem to be three alternative answers to this question. Either there is no material difference between his efforts as a theologian and what the philosophers, both pagan and Christian, did when they talked about God; or Calvin (whom I have selected, not only because he was an eminent theologian, but because he is the inspirer of the Reformed world-view) was doing philosophy; the philosophers often did theology. Any one these would make quite clear why Calvin cou as he did, so easily agree and disagree with thin that philosophers had taught about God. What hope to show in this article is that only one these, the last one, is helpful if we are concern to distinguish philosophy from theology and defi the tasks of each. But first I will discuss the oth two, spending a great deal of time on the form of these, since it is in the framework of this o that the problems of faith and reason, theology a philosophy, special and general revelation, ha usually arisen.

Perhaps, then, there is no material differen between Calvin's efforts as a theologian a what the philosophers did in their talking abo God. This is the simplest explanation and reflec the traditional view of philosophy. Later on I w question the adequacy of this view with respe to the question of distinguishing philosophy a theology; but first I want to set down some of implications for Calvinist theologians and phil ophers.

For one thing, we ought to ask whether t "non-speculative" method which Calvin propos for theology has any bearing on such issues as are discussing. It is a method which he elaborat especially in connection with the doctrine of pred tination: "Let us, then, in the first place, bear mind, that to desire any other knowledge of p destination than what is unfolded in the word God, indicates as great folly, as a wish to wa through unpassable roads, or to see in the dar (III, xxi, 2). It is clear, I believe, that Calv elaborated this method with particular regard the source and norm of theological doctrine; b not as a sort of biblicism to be resorted to in o der that all non-Scriptural terminology and all dinary attempts at interpretation might be avo ed. It can be shown from the opening five pa graphs of his chapter on the Trinity that Calv insisted rather on something quite the opposi These first five paragraphs of chapter thirte Book I, constitute something of a classic treatme of the nature and difficulties of language abo God. I implied in my first article that Calvin, his understanding of the Trinity, somewhat u critically accepted Greek metaphysical distin tions, and this is on the whole, I believe, corre but it is an incomplete account, as a reading of t

ole context reveals. At any rate, what he says re concerning language about God would seem be appropriate not only for theologians, but o for philosophers who view their science in the ditional way.

Calvin is very critical, for example, of the etical biblicists who "rail at the word *person*": ow very unreasonable is it to reprobate words ich express nothing but what is testified and orded in the Scriptures! . . . . What forbids expressing, in plainer words, those things ich, in the Scriptures, are to our understanding, ricate and obscure, provided our expressions giously and faithfully convey the true sense of Scripture, and are used with modest caution, not without sufficient occasion?" (I, xiii, 3). He n says that the Church is "absolutely necessi-ed" to this procedure, and asserts that if anyone offended by the non-Scriptural terminology that ults, he is "offended at the light of the truth" lf. Further: "If, then, the words have not n rashly invented, we should beware lest we be victed of fastidious temerity in rejecting them" xiii, 5) — so important is the language in which interpret Scripture, and therefore in which we uld our beliefs.

But, as we have already found typical of Cal-, there is another side to the question — a side ich we may be apt to overlook. This is the as-t of the inadequacy of all language about God. at Calvin senses even some relativity in such guage can be seen in the first quotation above, n though this quotation emphasizes the neces-of interpretation. Significant phrases there "plainer words" and "provided our expressions giously and faithfully convey the true sense Scripture." The burning question is, who de-mines just which are the "plainer words," and ether a given expression "faithfully conveys true sense of Scripture," especially in the ab-ce of an infallible interpretation such as is pre-ned in the Roman Catholic Church? Is it not te likely that what is "plain language" in one e appears at some other time very unclear? The tory of the changes in the meanings of words ght to support this, as well as the way in which ilosophical distinctions and systems have their y, pass away, and again come into vogue. Cal-n confesses: "I am not so rigidly precise as to be id of contending for mere words" and goes on remind us "that the (fathers), who otherwise eak on these subjects with great piety, are not nsistent with each other, nor, in all cases, with emselves," in their attempts to interpret Scrip-re. He recalls Hilary's resenting it that some en constrained him "to expose to the danger of man language those things which ought to be nfined within the religion of the mind; plainly avowing that this is to do things unlawful, to express things inexpressible, to assume things not conceded," since, once we have said, "Father, Son, and Spirit," "whatever is sought further, is beyond the signification of language, beyond the reach of our senses, beyond the conception of our understanding." Calvin acknowledges with Augustine "the poverty of human language on so great a subject," such that we use it "not for the sake of expressing what God is, but to avoid passing it over in total silence."

Here, perhaps, is Calvin's significant contribution to the problem of the relation of faith to language, and particularly to traditional philosophical concepts and distinctions: his insight into the nature of these terms for what they are — necessary vehicles in the communication and understanding of our faith, yet tentative in so far as they are relative to a given age. Thus his own eagerness to construe his faith in terms he considered relevant to his own day, and yet his refusal to let his theology be swallowed up by the main ideas of any one philosophical system. Something of a "proper medium" (I,xiii,3) is what he sought; a medium between the two sides we have been considering, both of which he exhibits together in a nice summary near the end of his discussion: "This moderation of these holy men [Hilary and Augustine] should teach us, not to pass such severe censures on those who are unwilling to subscribe to expressions adopted by us, provided they are not actuated by pride, perverseness, or disingenuous subtlety. But let them [the biblicists] also, on the other hand, consider the great necessity which constrains us to use such language, that, by degrees, they may at length be accustomed to a useful phraseology" (I,xiii,5).

The Calvinist theologian will want, I should think, to do theology somewhat after the manner of Calvin: he will take into account the theological efforts of philosophers who have done philosophy in the traditional way. Though he will not commit himself to one philosophic system, he will utilize in all systems what he feels he should. What modern philosophies — say idealism, existentialism, and neo-realism — have produced on the subject of God will be as relevant to his theological efforts, as were Aristotelian realism, Neo-platonic idealism, and late medieval voluntarism and scepticism to Calvin's. The fear that such modern philosophies are secularized, naturalistic expressions of autonomous Renaissance man he will count as no objection; for he will realize that the Greek-Hellenistic crucible into which Christianity was first poured was precisely as naturalistic and uninformed by revelation as they. After the Reformation, as well as before, the church and its theologians think in terms of some kind of fusion of

the Christian faith with the "truth of natural reason" in its theological attempts, however this happens, in the various traditional "philosophies," to appear. The distance between revelation and the language of scientific theology will serve to keep the theologian humble; but the conviction of his faith and the urgency of his immediate situation will press him to understand and to communicate his faith in and for his time.

There are at least two other ways in which Christians have related their faith to philosophy as this has traditionally been performed; these may be called the "committed" and the "hostile." An example of the former would be Thomism. Aquinas embraced one philosophical system, and Thomists have been more or less committed to its exposition ever since. An example of the latter would be Luther's, Kierkegaard's, and Barth's hostility toward philosophy as constituting a threat to evangelical faith. Between these two is a "middle way," the "open" relation which Calvin exhibits between his faith and the philosophic systems both of his heritage and of his own day. It would be interesting to inquire whether this "openness" has been preserved by his followers, not only theologians, but also philosophers — if Calvin's approach is held to determine any policies for them as for the theologians. The diversity that we might expect to follow from this "non-committal" approach of Calvin is manifested, if not in individual Calvinists, at least in the Calvinist tradition. In the sixteenth century already there was debate between the Aristotelians (Beza) and the anti-Aristotelians (Vermigli, Ramus). In the seventeenth century are found Calvinist Cartesians Bérulle, Bekker) and the scholastic anti-Cartesians (Voetius). In the eighteenth century there were the Scottish "Common Sense" realists. By the nineteenth century we find Abraham Kuyper working out an epistemology, and even a conception of God, in the terminology of the idealist solution to the empiricist-rationalist controversy of the previous century. And in our own century we see continued attempts at a "critical philosophy," reminiscent of Kant, by the *Wetsidee* school in the Netherlands; and, in America, some accommodations to British-American idealism in the theology of Dr. C. Van Til, as well as the defense of realism traditionally associated with Calvin College and Seminary.

But what about implications in Calvin for Calvinists who wish to do philosophy? If they wish to do philosophy in the traditional way, much of what Calvin said about theological language will bear upon their efforts. Calvin often distinguishes, however, what he himself is doing from certain other things philosophers have done, and with respect to these, it is evident that Calvinist philosophers will go to Calvin for help in vain. Calv interests were theological, and he often discla any intentions of doing philosophy and inve gating its disputes. All questions of detail "leaves to the philosophers" themselves. He d not, of course, repudiate the science of philoso as such, as is clear from his commentary on Pa "Take heed lest there be anyone that maketh s of you through his philosophy and vain decei "Many have mistakenly imagined that philoso is here condemned by Paul," while he only "me everything that men contrive of themselves w wishing to be wise through means of their o understanding. . . . Under the term philoso Paul has merely condemned all spurious doctri which come forth from man's head" (*Comment* on Col. 2:8). Yet he comes, as we have seen, sha ly to terms with the philosophers in their tea ings about God. The conclusion would seem be that, if Calvinist philosophers continue to philosophy in the traditional way, they run risk of sometimes saying the types of things ab God which theologians will be very concerned wi either to borrow or to reject. And of course, th may be no need to cavil about the name of a s ence, so long as what is done there is underst for what it really is.

But I want now to question this traditio view of philosophy; and I think this is warrant by the fact that theologians have been as concern as they have with what philosophers have sa about God — either to commit themselves who to one system, to register hostility, or to leave t way between theologians and philosophers "ope There is hardly a cavil in the obvious problem th suggests itself, a definition of the philosophe task in such a way that this will be distinguish from that of the theologian — in such a way, other words, that the confusion will be avoid which is often manifested in the exclamatio "Well, philosophy or theology, call it what y will!" This exclamation is a tacit admission th there is no material distinction beween the effo of theologians and those of philosophers engag in talk about God. How then have the two scienc been kept distinct traditionally? Largely, it seem to me, in terms of their source: natural reason a intuition in philosophy, as opposed to revelation theology. No doubt this is an important distin tion, but is it the kind of distinction with which differentiate two sciences from each other? A not sciences more naturally differentiated accor ing to the *object* of their study? If so, the fir alternative, though adequate as an explanation f certain facts, is irrelevant if brought to bear the normative question: How should philosoph and theology be defined? It is a convention, a a very helpful one, to distinguish sciences occor

ıg to the *objects* of their investigation; the con-ısion and endlessness of the discussions of the ɛlation of philosophy to theology occur simply ecause in one case, the case of philosophy, the ɔnvention has in an important respect, been ig-ɔred.

Not that theology is the first science which the hilosophers have been pressed to give up. They ın be observed to have given up a great many ɔecific investigations since the days of Plato ıd Aristotle, when philosophers were the only sci-ıtists there were, including as their task mathe-.atics, physics, psychology, political science — in-ɛed, the whole range of modern sciences. But ıce their time, these all have broken away; all, ɪcept theology, which together with the insights religion, has not entirely proved its indepen-ıce from philosophy like the others, so that the sputes over the relationship of the two continues ɔ rage. And this is, perhaps, surprising; for it not due to the fact that the other sciences have dvanced so greatly, while theology stood still. uite the opposite is true; for under the stimulus the divine revelation fulfilled in Christ, theol-gy has been plumbed to depths that will stand ɔmparison with the far reaches of any other mod-ɔn science.

T MIGHT BE objected that we should become suspicious of what Calvin was doing, rather ıan of the traditional philosophers. This leads us ɔ consider the second alternative: perhaps Calvin as doing philosophy, and should rather have left alone. This move is popular today among the eo-orthodox theologians. It is, however, a move spired not by Calvin, but by Luther. The ap-roach of these theologians is of greatest impor-ıce in reminding the church that the ways of ith are not the ways of reason. But whether eir hostility toward philosophical systems, to-ard what Kierkegaard called the intellectual ıeditation" of the finite and the infinite, succeeds providing a view of faith (to make one exam-le) that is free from presupposing philosophical stinctions — this is another question. It is quite pparent to many students of Kierkegaard that is notion of faith would have been impossible ithout his philosophical view of the relationship etween finite and infinite.

But the question is, Can it be said that Calvin as doing philosophy? Even if it be shown that e had "philosophical presuppositions" and used hilosophical terms and distinctions? This alterna-ve appears to be the least likely one, and certain-the least helpful in the attempt to distinguish ıeology from philosophy. It ought to be signifi-ant that Calvin did not regard himself as a phi-sopher, even when he dealt with the philoso-phers; nor have philosophers since his time ever regarded him as one. More pointed still is the fact that those contemporary theologians involved in the "natural theology in Calvin" debate (some of whom are hostile to philosophy), regardless of their different interpretations, agree in regarding Calvin's relationship to the philosopher's discussion of God as a relationship to something very like the science in which he himself was engaged, namely theology. To be sure, theology of a certain kind ("natural"), but *theology* all the same. This is the feature of the "natural theology in Calvin" debate that seems especially relevant to the question regarding the nature and task of philosophy.

THE REMAINING alternative is that philosophers often did theology. Dr. De Boer, in his article "Theology and Philosophy," supported this alternative by discussing a given philosopher, Plato. What I have tried to do is support it by calling attention to a theologian, Calvin, and particularly to the fact that this theologian was on terms with what philosophers like Plato have said about God. The ground I am offering in support of this alternative is, in a word, the fact of a *conversation* that has existed between the theologians (if Calvin is typical) and the philosophers — a type of conversation that we do not find occurring between the other sciences. The "borderline" sciences are no exception: psycho-physics is still physics, more narrowly applied; and so with organic chemistry, political history, and the rest.

A typical example of such a conversation between philosophers and theologians would be: one philosopher teaches a pantheism, another panentheism, another deism, a theologian rejects them all and proposes theism. The question is, what were the philosophers doing, that their views were regarded as alternatives of the theologian's theism, if not theology? Or again, one philosopher teaches that God is the Absolute Subject (an idealist), another that He is a transcendent Thou (an Existentialist), another that He is a transcendental Person, absolute in some respects, relative in others (a naturalistic theist); a theologian comes along and asserts that God is all, some, or none of these. Is he not opening a debate with others of his kind, theologians? Such a conclusion is the most helpful one in our attempt to distinguish theology and philosophy. There may have been differences in source and method between theologians such as Calvin and philosophers, especially those who were pagan — indeed there were; and important differences too. But if the delimitations of a science have anything to do with "subject matter," it would seem plausible and clarifying to hold that the philosophers often did theology. For in this way theology

receives a specific object for its investigation, one which other sciences ought not to investigate at all, or at least not in such a manner that they risk debate with the theologians with whom talk about God is a specialty.

The problem this poses for the philosopher, Calvinist or otherwise, is: How can he talk "about God," not to mention "everything else," in such a way that he will not be suspected of covertly doing theology or some other science under the name of philosophy? What can he find for an object of his specific investigation that will distinguish his science from all others? It is in answer to questions such as these, which seem very urgent, that I understand the proposal of the Positivists — or better, the more recent "Language Philosophers." Their proposal is that philosophers investigate the *logic of our language*. They regard this investigation as a clarifying, descriptive activity, involving a skill which is no more dependent for its successful exercise upon religious intuitions and confessions of faith than such artistic skills as drawing and carpentry, or such professional skills as medicine and law. Thus they are concerned to describe the different ways in which statements (religious and theological statements included) "hang together"; and even how the situations in which men make them (extra-linguistic as those are) often bear upon the fact that these statements (or groups of statements) do hang together and "make sense." Notice how this makes "the logic of our language" a more complicated inquiry than it had formerly been thought to be, restricted as it was to questions of formal, syntactical relationships.

Misgivings about the implications for religion and theology of the linguistic program sometimes arise because it was developed largely within the British empiricist tradition which, as is commonly admitted, was hostile toward theological statements in two of its former phases: the one associated with Hume in the eighteenth century, and the one associated with the Logical Positivists of a few decades ago. It would seem, therefore, a salutary development that among present-day Linguistic Philosophers, by contrast with some of their empiricist predecessors, theists as well as agnostics are to be found. At any rate, the importa fact is that religious and theological language again being reckoned with, instead of being pr scribed from the concern of philosophers by mea of the dogmatic employment of "Hume's fork" the "verification principle." And this fact seems reflect a more consistent empiricism than the prioristic methods of other empiricists in the pas that is, the language of religion is regarded as *given* for the concern of philosophers, as much the language of observation, evaluation, scienti hypotheses, poetry, and the rest. Thus Linguist Philosophy can significantly be regarded as empiricism purified from its former dogmatism for it makes no theological, metaphysical, esthet claims — it makes no *claims* at all. In Wittge stein's words: "Philosophy simply puts everythin before us, and neither explains nor deduces an thing . . . . Philosophy may in no way interfe with the actual use of language; it can in the en only describe it . . . . It leaves everything as it is."*

I HAVE TRIED to show (1) that what theologian do with what philosophers have said warran asking the question, What were the philosophe doing when they talked about God, if not th ology? (2) that, if we answer, It *was* theolog we must further ask, What can the philosophers c that will distinguish them from the theologians and (3) that the proposal of the Linguistic Philo ophers, that philosophy is analysis of language, is perfectly possible answer to this latter questio In addition, I have implied that this is a ver useful answer. Not that it is without its assum tions and difficulties; though this fact hardly di tinguishes it from traditional philosophic pr grams, and does not therefore in itself serve warrant any offhand suspicion or mistrust. Th point is that their proposal provides philosophe with a task that clearly distinguishes their scienc from all others, theology included. And this seem to be something — something important — whic the traditional view of philosophy and theology ha failed to achieve.

* *Philosophical Investigations*, pp. 124, 126.

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United Theological Education?

by Peter De Jong

ELING, with Dr. Harry Boer, that where matters basic church policy are at stake as thorough a cussion of relevant considerations as possible is be desired before the church embarks on a new urse, I would like to contribute a few reactions the November *Reformed Journal* article on hy United Theological Education in Northern geria?" and the issue with which it deals.

How the Question Arose

N ORDER to clearly appreciate just what is involved a short historical review is almost necesy. In 1955 a request had come to our mission rd that Dr. Harry Boer "be loaned to the itish Branch of the Sudan United Mission at ndiri for theological training." The Synod, on commendation of its advisory committee, of ich the undersigned was reporter, decided to ccede to the request of the Board for authorizan to lend a teacher at Gindiri for native pastor ining" (*Acts* 1955, pp. 358, 29). This seemed be both an honor to one of our missionaries and opportunity for us as Reformed Christians to ake a significant contribution to the future delopment of the African church beyond the reach our own field. It would have been difficult to fuse such a request for help.

By the spring of 1957, however, as Dr. Boer inted out in his article, there had been further velopments in the plans for a training school. ie board was confronted now with a plan, no nger for furnishing requested help to another ission in its training program at Gindiri, but r a completely new, independent institution at nother location, in which it was proposed that me half-dozen missions should cooperate in tablishing and maintaining a united seminary. ir initial contribution to the first building was be $12,000. The mission board was by no means ady to accept this new proposal. Discussion disosed that there were extensive misgivings about e whole plan. Instead of accepting it the board commended to the Synod:

"1. That Dr. H. R. Boer be encouraged to carry forward the plans to teach in the united theological seminary *as originally proposed two years ago.*

2. That the initial program be conducted in the facilities at Gindiri.

3. That the N.G.C. (Nigeria General Conference) initiate such steps that the program become more obviously a native church program rather than a missionary-imposed matter" (*Acts* 1957, p. 273).

Classis Sioux Center, becoming apprehensive about these developments, sent a protest to the Synod of 1957 against "the united effort of theological training in one seminary of interdenominational character" on the grounds that "we cannot and may not compromise our doctrinal and ecclesiastical principles" (*Acts* 1957, pp. 132-33).

The Synod's Answer to the Question

The Synod adopted the board's recommendation and rejected the protest of Classis Sioux Center. Since we are interested particularly in the "theological side of the question," and it is that to which Dr. Boer's article is directed, it is in order to look a bit more closely at the way Synod answered that question as raised by Classis Sioux Center. The Synod declared:

"(a) There is no 'compromise of our ecclesiastical principles' in the plans for theological education which were approved by the Synod of 1955 and further elaborated in the proposals submitted by the Nigerian General Conference to the Board. Grounds: This is not to be a school of our denomination but will belong to the autonomous Churches in Nigeria." The background material immediately preceding this decision in the *Acts* further explains, "It may be noted that the plans previously approved by Synod in 1955 do not involve the Christian Reformed Church as such in any program of interdenominational theological education. These plans provide only for the loaning of a missionary teacher by the Christian Reformed Church to the Church of Christ, Benue province (Ekkliziyar Kristi A Sudan Lardin Benue), a church which is, incidentally, a sister church" (*Acts* 1957, pp. 53, 54). When one goes back to the 1955 decisions, however, one looks in vain for any reference to this national church or a loan of a teacher to its program. The loan is to the *British Branch of the Sudan United Mission.* The report at this point seems to misstate the facts. That the Synod was evidently laboring under some mistaken impressions becomes even more apparent when one has followed all of the reports on the development of the program and particularly those that have been sent out since the Synod. In the latter Dr. Boer welcomed the new emphasis that the Synod placed on the idea that the school is to belong to the national church, but pointed out that the national church cannot set up such a school, provide its facilities or furnish its staff. We (and the other missions) will have to do all of these or

there will be no school. If we must make the plans, provide the staff, and furnish the buildings for the school, is it fair that a question about the soundness of the plan should be brushed aside with the answer: "We are not responsible because it isn't our school"? We are certainly responsible for plans we make, the staff we provide, the buildings we put up and what use is to be made of them! How valid then is the Synod's grounds for dismissing the ecclesiastical question of the protest that "this is not to be a school of our denomination?"

The second declaration of the Synod was: "(b) There is no 'compromise of our theological principles' in the plans for the theological education which were approved by the Synod of 1955 and further elaborated in the proposals submitted by the Nigerian General Conference to the Board. Grounds: (1) Our Missionary Teacher is expected to teach in accordance with his theological convictions. This is assured in the proposed plan." A second grounds follows, although the *Acts* does not say it was adopted: "Our Missionary Teacher is permitted by provisions of the proposed plan to give additional training to the students that come from he Lupwe-Tiv area. This will insure the instilling of Reformed principles in the native pastors prepared for our sister churches in Nigeria."

At this point one needs to make a distinction. It may be maintained that for us to loan a teacher to another mission for training as was proposed in 1955 need involve no compromise. For us to participate in setting up a school designed to teach converts of our missionary effort several, to some extent contradictory, brands of theology is quite another matter. How can we set up a school and send the most promising converts of our missionary effort to a school which we deliberately design to teach perhaps 2/3 or 5/6 Arminian, Lutheran, and Baptist theology and at the same time be faithful to the solemn commitment every official in our church at home or on a mission field makes when he signs our churches' form of subscription? In that subscription, "We declare, moreover, that we not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine, and particularly those which were condemned by the above mentioned Synod (of Dordt — i.e. Arminianism), but that we are disposed to refute and contradict these and to exert ourselves in keeping the church free from such errors." To set up a school designed among other things to teach Arminian theology is not "exerting ourselves in keeping the church free from such errors." If this isn't compromise what should one call it?*

Furthermore, considering the welfare of the national church which our missionary program is designed to establish and assist, we need to face the question whether it is possible to train re sound church leadership in a seminary in w all of these conflicting views are being tau Must not such training inevitably produce co sion rather than sound convictions in the min those who are trained, and will such training the long run not produce a doctrinally weak indifferent church? Has that not been the re of other united seminary ventures?

The Nigerian Theological Situation

Apprehensions of this kind Dr. Boer endeav to meet in his published article. In it he points that Christianity in Northern Nigeria is "theol ically undiscriminating and therefore theologic undifferentiated." The missions working th have not "succeeded to any significant degree establishing . . . specifically denominational liefs." Later he qualifies this by observing t although the Africans may be taught theologi distinctions these would still be meaningless them. At this point one is tempted to ask whet failure of people to appreciate sound Christ doctrine makes it meaningless and unimporta Most of the people in the United States, too, indifferent to matters of doctrine, and many our churches, adults as well as children, have lit appreciation for doctrinal distinctions, but sho that lead us to the conclusion that we should st teaching them? Does it not rather increase c responsibility, in as Biblical and practical a ma ner as possible, to teach and preach them? If t new African church is understandably weak this point, should we help to strengthen or furth weaken it?

The Significance of History and the Word of Go

Dr. Boer goes on to explain that our Calvinis heritage is primarily a matter of history. O must certainly recognize that history and traditi have strongly influenced the development of o own and every other church. That history we ca not, of course, pass on to others as though it we theirs. But if we stop at this point we fail to re ognize what is much more important, that o Reformed faith is much more than merely one many religious products of history. For men suc as Calvin and Knox the mere consideration

* It may be of interest to some readers to observe th the issue that finally led to the calling of the Synod Dordt was the question whether Arminian theology shou be tolerated as a permissible teaching in a state universit where men were being trained for the ministry of the n tional church. Now, strangely enough, we who claim th decision of the Synod of Dordt as one of our confession find ourselves taking a leading role in setting up a sem nary in which Arminian and other divergent beliefs are be taught along with the Reformed faith to men bein trained for the ministry in another national church!

story would have led to their remaining in the oman church. What was it that explained the velopment of the Reformation? Was it not *a turn to the Scriptures,* in defiance of merely historical and traditional influences? We believe, or ght to believe, in the Reformed faith not because Dutch blood or history, but because the Scripres teach it! If on the mere basis of history we aintain that we are and ought to be Reformed cause our fathers were, then the Lutheran ght to remain Lutheran, and the Roman Cathic a Roman Catholic, and some of our liberal quaintances will be quick to remind us, the pagan ght to remain a pagan for the same reason! oth in our churches and in our missionary efforts road, as Dr. Boer himself has in the past so ly reminded us, we need to take our stand *not* the basis of mere *history* or tradition, but on the sis of the *Word of God.* That Word of God is ually valid everywhere. It may be true that the stinction between Arminianism and Calvinism about as poorly understood by the new African nvert as the distinction between supra- and fra-lapsarianism is among us, but are we therere to conclude that in Africa it makes no essenal difference whether the ministers of the native urch preach that one is saved by the sovereign ace of God or that one is saved largely by his vn efforts?

And should it be a matter of relative indifferce to us whether our missionary program is omoting one kind of teaching or the other, or an tempted mixture of the two? Are we not in frica as well as in the U. S. committed precisely preaching "the whole councel of God" and "all" at Christ has commanded us (Acts 20:27, Matew 28:20)? May we, to use the picturesque exession of Paul, "shrink from" that and present somewhat abbreviated, simplified or compromised version in order to suit the local tastes of frica, Japan, or New Mexico?

Which Course Will Better Meet the Need?

At the conclusion of his article Dr. Boer neatly mmarizes the argument that weighs heavily ith the undersigned as with many in our urches: "It may still be urged that if it is our ity to prepare the African Church to meet the allenges that she will have in time to meet, and we must lead her as correctly as we can into the eaning of Scripture, then we should undertake discharge these tasks from a wholly Reformed oint of view." Well said! But let the reader judge ow satisfactorily this argument is answered by ne one that such a Reformed seminary might inder rather than help the African minister by iving him too much theology! Can the training for a Christian ministry be too sound? Or will a mixture of false doctrine help to guard a man against the danger of becoming one-sidedly scholastic? If false teaching is a danger in this country, is it not an even greater danger to a church whose foundations are being laid, whose leadership is rather uncritical, and which confronts the great opportunity to evangelize a still largely pagan country?

The article further attempts to nullify the argument for a Reformed seminary with the observation, "There is little reason to believe that a wholly Reformed seminary would turn out men more distinctly Reformed — then will now be the case." But can any reader accept this conclusion, that a seminary teaching five or six brands of conflicting theology would do just as good a job of teaching the Reformed faith as one wholly committed to it? Could one expect that a seminary staffed by a Lutheran, an Anglican, a Methodist, a Brethren and a Reformed professor would do just as good a job of preparing for the Reformed ministry as Calvin Seminary does? Conditions may be different in Africa, but can they be that different?

As Dr. Boer in effect states in his concluding paragraph, in the plans for a united seminary practical considerations such as the cultural advantages, the equipment and academic prestige of a larger school and the inclinations of the native churches are being permitted to outweigh the consideration of sound doctrine.

It is easily understood that in the foreign field, where one is confronted on every side by paganism rather than by other churches, denominational differences seem much less important than they do at home. One can feel, too, for the principle that the Christian should cooperate as much as possible with other Christians and that we ought not to try to pass on in the mission fields all of the organizational differences that have arisen here. Neither need we try to urge the African church established through our missionary efforts to take over word for word our confessions. But this does not mean that doctrinal differences are unimportant there. It may not make much difference whether our African sister church takes over our Canons of Dordt, or prefers the Westminster Confession, or designs a confession of its own, but it makes a great deal of difference for our work and much more for the future of that church whether we in our missionary effort are faithfully going to pass on to it as far as we understand it "the whole counsel of God," or are going to compromise that in the interests of ecumenical considerations and native preferences, and settle for passing on to them and specifically to their coming ministry a kind of confused "general Christianity." To do the latter is to betray the Lord's trust to us, to lay

the African church wide open to the danger of having its faith and witness undercut even before it is well founded, and to push it in the direction of the kind of ecumenical compromise that is so effectively undermining the Christian witness throughout the world.

A former African missionary suggests from personal observation that especially in the situation confronting the Christian church on that continent, the Reformed faith with its Biblical doctrine of the sovereignty of God and salvation by grace only, alone of all of the varieties of Christian belief, meets squarely the challenge of militant Mohammedan work-righteousness and fatalism, which is the big threat facing the Christian church of Africa. In view of that fact would it not s the more urgent that we should give the co leadership as thorough a training as possibl that faith under men devoted to it, rather send them to a united school taught mainly by who hold to some extent opposing faiths?

If "the present ability of the brightest yo African meaningfully to absorb our Western t logical distinctions is strictly limited," is it wiser to build up our existing Reformed trai facilities and pass on a solid training as wel we can, rather than embark on a venture of s doubtful value and such theological hazards a big new united seminary?

Response to Rev. De Jong's Article

IN THE March and November, 1957, issues of *The Reformed Journal* I set forth at some length why, from both the practical and theological points of view, the proposed theological school in Northern Nigeria is a necessity. A restatement of the considerations there adduced would be repetitious. I shall therefore limit my response to Rev. De Jong's article to two other factors which may well be emphasized in the present context.

THE FIRST of these is that the idea of erecting a separate theological school for students in the disrict where we are active as a mission is a direct contradiction of all board and synodical decisions that have been taken up to the present date.

In 1955, when plans for theological education in Northern Nigeria were first officially acted upon, the Board proposed that I be sent to Nigeria as "instructor for ministerial candidates being prepared by the several missions associated with the Sudan United Mission." This would seem to mean that we did not envision a *separate* school for our own students or that I would be engaged in theological education which would have no connection with meeting the need for a more educated ministry on our own field.

Moreover, in its recommendation to Synod, the Board further wrote, "We believe that this will be a significant step in the right direction and be the beginning of a seminary program that may have great significance for the future of the African Church." The idea that our effort in connection with the other missions on the field would sooner or later form part of a *seminary program* was therefore present from the beginning.

It was in terms of this understanding that Sy appointed me to the work of theological educa on our African field in June, 1955.

At its annual meeting in February, 1957, Board had before it a full statement of the pl that had been worked out on the field and that been wholeheartedly endorsed by our own Niger General Conference of missionaries. The Bo noted in its minute on the subject that it had s questions about the indigenous character of school as planned and therefore it took no fi action at that time. Nevertheless, it decided, "T Dr. H. Boer be encouraged to carry forward plans to teach in the *united theological semin* as originally proposed two years ago" (my italic

These decisions were further strengthened the unambiguous action of the Synod of 1957 w it rejected an overture which claimed that invol ment in the proposed theological school wo mean ecclesiastical and theological comprom In doing so it had not simply my personal teach in the school in mind but the plans as origina proposed two years ago *and as elaborated by Nigerian General Conference.*

At the annual Board meeting of February, 19 all the objections raised by Rev. De Jong were fu and frankly faced and at great length. It w found that the alternative which he proposed w not acceptable and with only three votes disse ing the following recommendation was made Synod:

> The Board recommends that Synod participate in program for United Theological Education in North Nigeria.
>
> Grounds:
>
> a. Nigerian General Conference urgently requests it
> b. The African Church desires it.
> c. All the other missions and churches with which as a mission are most intimately associated are s porting the school.

d. Synod rejected the Sioux Center overture which claimed that the united theological school would compromise our theological and ecclesiastical principles.

Rev. De Jong's proposal that we now in effect rn our back on what we have ourselves taken the ad in creating and that we erect a separate school eans a total abandonment and rejection of the ttern that has consistently been followed and veloped on the field and at home. Were this new ewpoint to prevail, deep and painful wedges ould be driven between our mission and the urch in Northern Nigeria and the other missions which we sustain intimate relations, and the me Christian Reformed would become a byword r unreliability.

The second consideration is, if anything, eightier than the foregoing. Nowhere in Rev. e Jong's article is there a recognition of the inpendence and right of judgment of the African urch. Last year the church on our own field was cognized by our Synod as fully a sister church. is church has its own considered view of what best for her in the situation in which she finds rself. It is her desire, as it is that of the other urches associated with her in the Fellowship of urches of Christ in the Sudan, that she do tother with her sister churches what can be done gether. Among these things theological edution occupies a prominent place.

Generally, the churches that have come out of ission work are little inclined to accept as a basis for divisions among themselves the ecclesiastical divisions of the West. The churches in Northern Nigeria are no exception to this rule. They wish the future leaders of the churches to know each other and to be trained together. They will little understand and little respect a missionary leadership which for three years works with them to attain an ideal to which both they and the sending church stand committed, and which then turns around and says, "No, we are not going to do what we have planned and prayed for together. We will do this instead." Such an action on our part would call into the most serious question the true indigeneity and independence of the church for which as a mission we have worked and which was synodically recognized by us in 1957.

The church in Northern Nigeria is a reality. She stands committed to a program of united theological education. In that program we of the Christiain Reformed Church may take a large and honorable place. Not only have the churches and the missions that gave them birth received one of our own ministers as a teacher in the school and charged him with administrative responsibility, they have also elected our veteran missionary, the Rev. E. H. Smith, president of the Board of Governors. This confidence we should respond to with every means at our command within the school framework for the giving of this response which has come into being. The Synod of 1957 and the annual meeting of the Mission Board of 1958 have, I believe, unequivocally expressed the mind of the Christian Reformed Church in this matter.

HARRY R. BOER

BOOK REVIEWS

AST OF ALL SAINTS, by Grace Irwin. 261 pp. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957. $3.50.

viewed by GEORGE G. HARPER, tructor in English, Calvin College.

It has been a source of sadness to ny who call themselves evangelicals at the excellence of their religious tness is not matched by a correonding excellence in their cultural tness. First-rate graphic art, music, chitecture are perhaps too much to pect of small evangelical groups, pecially those with little or no artic tradition behind them. But evanlicals have had a good publishing adition to fall back on, and from e days of John Bunyan until roughly e end of the nineteenth century good writing was not wanting. However, in the last fifty years, particularly in the United States, the literary offering of evangelical people, despite its increasing spate, is poor in quality, unrealistic, naive — at times to the point of farcicality: one recalls the split-second "conversions" of impossible creatures plummeting to earth in a wounded airliner — and, very often, theologically so rudimentary that to call it Christian at all is in many cases to verge on the blasphemous. A recent review in *Christianity Today* of a so-called "prize" novel defines quite accurately the bad extreme to which that kind of evangelical writing has come; the reviewer, himself an evangelical, committed, one knows, to charity even in this matter, writes harshly of the naiveté, the cliché-ridden sentimentality, the slick-magazine factitiousness of the book. The review is an excellent mirror of too much evangelical novel-writing of the past few decades in this country. The time is ready for the emergence of good evangelical fiction, good because it presents credible human beings, displayed in their full moral dimensions, struggling with the very real powers of good and evil that surge and battle in all people, and not the least of those who are among the redeemed.

Grace Irwin, it seems likely from her book, *Least of All Saints*, deserves the gratitude of the many who look for the renascence of good Christian fiction. Her novel has all the qualities of a good novel, but not all, perhaps, in quite the degree necessary to make it a first-rate novel. But to have done

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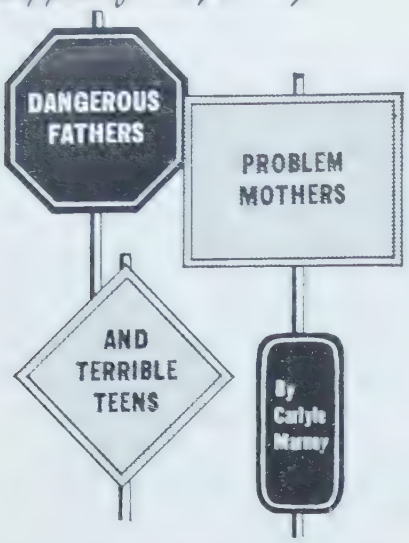

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as much as she does to reverse the trend of evangelical fiction is honor enough; to have done so with the degree of skill that her book displays is to add weight to that honor, and any judgment of her book which does not begin by calling it a good novel, without unnecessary qualification, is an unfair judgment.

Her chief character. Andrew Connington, scion of an old Wesleyan family which found its earthly fortune in Canada, scholar (Oxford), consistent humanist (with an intellectual honesty that one likes to think is a quality proper mainly and primarily to the religious heirs of John Calvin and the other Reformers), man of action (World War I and the League of Nations Secretariat), who is led first to become a minister mainly because of his disgust with the religious liberalism of the nineteen-twenties and his concern that believing people ought at least to have the essentials of their belief presented to them in their pristine form, without the amiable muddiness of liberal terminology, is finally struck to earth, quite literally (the scene on the hummock of North Canadian earth on which Andrew lies, beat down by the final visit of the Spirit, is very powerful) by what one can only recognize as a true conversion. There is little egregious material in this account of a spiritual journey to disturb the reader who insists on retaining his wits and his judgment along with his evangelical commitment.

Miss Irwin's hero, then, is quite credible, and so are the things that happen to him. He has a sense of humor (when has one last seen an evangelical novel hero with anything more than, at best, a kind of sickly facetiousness which is easily seen as a part of his vocational manner), and the speech that Miss Irwin allows him is entirely in keeping with his position, his character, and his family history. She lets him wobble now and then, perhaps: a hint of Wesleyan priggishness keeps him from enjoying a refreshing highball on a hot day, and his *apologia* for refusing a smoke disturbed this reviewer's rapport for a moment, but in general Connington is allowed to live a real life in this book, and Miss Irwin has drawn in him a highly moral man, with all his faculties and his human desires intact, to whom little that is human is foreign. When his conversion comes, it comes to a *man;* and what more can one ask of good evangelical fiction than this?

The other characters in the book are a bit more difficult to accept. Andrew's agnostic, ironic uncle is well drawn, and he provides a necessary polarity for Andrew's early idealism and later Christianity. But two women who enter Andrew's life are a bit harder to take. The first of these, a would-be sophisticate, is allowed to speak in clichés once too often; that, of course, might be forgiven, but Miss Irwin compounds the fault when she allows Andrew to *act* on the basis of the clichés. At one point Sonya, the liberated girl of the 'twenties, tries to seduce Andrew, but Andrew resists, not without a struggle:

> "There's nothing to be afraid of [says Sonya]. No one need ever know. If it's your profession you're thinking of, I'll never talk. You can trust me, Andrew."
>
> He hesitated, keeping his mind intent upon the reasons for refusal lest he should entertain the idea that it might not be necessary to refuse.
>
> "There is such a thing as a m code."
>
> "Knowing me, you can offer as a reason! As if we — you I — were not superior to con tions that will be out of date another generation."
>
> "I'm not talking about con tions," he began, but she brus his speech aside with almost l terical impatience.

This is followed by a long paragr of hardly credible bookish clic about moral relativism and the L but the effect is to send Andre blood, alas, pounding. Sonya, not this, continues her incredible sec tion via pseudo-philosophical cliché

> "Andrew, darling! You've c trolled yourself so long. Forge all for once. Everything else false. This is the only reality."

Andrew, equally incredibly, rea like a Buchmanite lion-tamer, and Oxford logician's training triumj over the song of the corpuscles:

> Fortunately her words awoke logician's brain in Andrew, a with it a resentment of his o weakness and her attempted co cion. He stood up and put a ch between them. He wanted to co ter her arguments, the current che arguments of those who rationali their lack of stamina by call light darkness and darkness lig But he could not begin a discussi of self-control and the true pleas of *to eu zen.* There was no alt native to direct refusal.

After the event, she wept. Andr crawled out into the cold Toro night, and the book again proceeds its regular pace. Having pointed t out, one can only make clear t the other woman in Andrew's life somewhat more credible, a sweet ch acter, with great promise for his futu as a believing minister of the Gos (however, one might still wonder w Andrew must be married at all: was doing fine as a celibate minist surely a very effectual kind, even Canada).

Miss Irwin's probing of the intrica structure of Andrew's rather surpri ing motives for entering the minist in the first place is extremely shrew and her style nicely conveys the resu of that probing. Also, she has ve carefully calculated the kinds of cris that lead to his eventual full surrend to the claims of the Gospel. This the first entirely credible conversi

t this reviewer has encountered in ngelical fiction in many years; reover, it is credible not only with- the confines of the literary situa- n itself, but also within the larger aning of that term as applied to at we like to think is a more *real* . The style, which sometimes be- nes a bit bookish but never de- nds to the merely colloquial or ksy, is generally lively, and the pace the story is well suited to the kind message that the story must bear.

The range of religious experience t Miss Irwin allows her characters have is impressive, as well as the cellent writing that she uses to de- ibe it. Andrew is allowed, at more n one point, to *know* what religion ans through a kind of mystical gagement of the whole sensibility in pattern of reality as perceived ough a well-trained mind; surely ss Irwin has built more than a little John Donne, at once theologian, nist, poet, and mystic, into the ure of Andrew, and for this we can ly rejoice.

This reviewer considers it a capital ark of the value of Miss Irwin's work at he felt throughout the reading of book that the author had done a eat deal of reading, not, as must the case with most other writers of angelical fiction, in the novels of ecisely those other writers of evan- lical fiction, but in a very wide nge of excellent devotional literature, eology ancient and modern, and the ographies of (at least) John Wesley d other spiritual giants of that kind; rtainly, too, the Metaphysical poets e represented in that reading, and ndrew's upward spring from his mmock upon receiving the Spirit ves much to Milton's Adam, who rang upward toward the heavens nen he first knew himself man.

This book must be read by all who lue good fiction, and especially all no long for the reappearance of the st evangelical literature.

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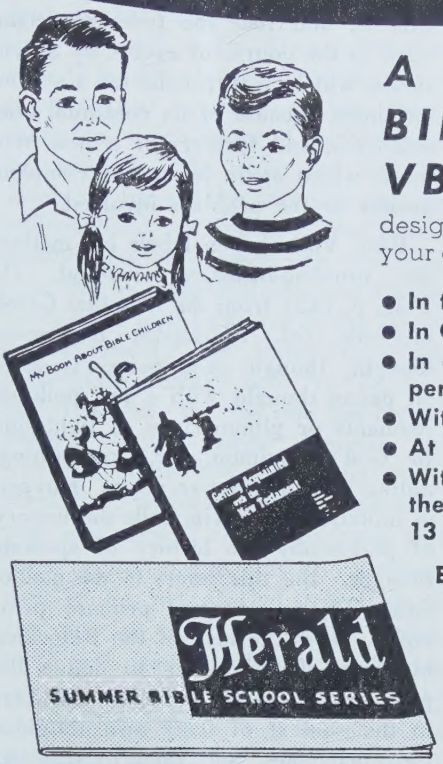

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HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, Volume I, by D. H. Th. Vollenhoven. 620 pp. Wever: Franeker, Netherlands, 1950. f. 25.00.

Reviewed by HENRY J. G. VAN ANDEL. Professor of Language and Culture of the Netherlands, Emeritus, Calvin College.

I. A New Method

The founders of the Philosophy of the "Law Idea" are the Professors Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd. The former is the historian who has pointed out the significance of Calvin as a thinker in his volume, *The Reformation of Philosophy*. He has also set forth, in a lecture entitled "The Necessity of a Christian Logic" (which means here theory of knowledge), a scale of fourteen aspects which fits in with Calvin's three concentric spheres of religion, social life, and culture, discussed in the *Institutes*, III, 19, the famous chapter on Christian liberty. The scale of fourteen (or fifteen) values is no windfall, but is partly of Platonic, partly of Augustinian, and partly of modern origin. It has been criticized for its order, and specifically for the place it assigns to history and art, but no one of note has denied its importance, for without a scale of aspects of reality (and life) no philosophy can come to clarity.

Prof. Dooyeweerd may be called the systematizer of the new philosophy, for he has not only worked out in detail the theory of his fifteen aspects, but he has, independent of the great English-American philosopher Whitehead, shown the importance of the three cosmical "modes": Structure, Function, and Purpose by individuation. These modes are mentioned indirectly already by Calvin (*Institutes*, I, 13, par. 18) and are embodied in Article 12 of our Belgic Confession as Being, Offices, and Form or shape. Dooyeweerd had applied them to the field of culture and institutions by speaking of the *basic, leading, and final*, functions of church, state, and society, and, for that matter, of any sphere, group, or institution.

These distinctions are very important; every Calvinist will grant that, for instance, economic life has its basis, character, and destination

(Vander Kooy). But very few will have realized that these three have something to do with Calvin's *Institutes* or with the Confession of Guido de Brès. We may grant that philosophy is not an easy subject, and that new terms are confusing until they have been explained fully. Moreover, there is the language barrier and the lack of a clear elementary textbook on the philosophy of the Law Idea — though we appreciate Rev. Spier's two "introductions," now available in English, and Dooyeweerd's own short treatise, *Transcendental Problems*. But we are sure that patience and forbearance are the best keys to this "new" system; thereby we will discover that this "new" philosophy is entirely in Calvin's line, as far as its roots and branches are concerned.

The volume at hand is the first of a series of ten which will reckon with the Reformed point of view. There are numerous philosophical handbooks and textbooks written from the humanistic and the Catholic angle, but there is only one Calvinistic *text*, that written by the late Prof. T. Hoekstra of Kampen Seminary, and there is no Calvinistic *handbook* at all. The present series will not be the work of one person, but of a number of Reformed scholars, among them Professors K. J. Popma and S. U. Zuidema.

Prof. Vollenhoven says in his preface that he will follow a *new method* which he thinks will be in harmony with our Reformed principles. Methods followed up to this day are synthetic either in the Thomistic or in the Hegelian sense. Catholic and other scholars have tried to "Christianize" pagan thought by interpreting what looked good to them in a "Christian" theistic setting, because they believed that the theoretical (or philosophical) reason of natural man is only weakened and not depraved, since it is a spark of God. Even Augustine was of the opinion that Neo-Platonic philosophy was so close to the truth that it could be taken over *paucis mutatis*, i. e., with a few changes. After Hegel, historians began to adopt his idea that every thesis is flanked by an antithesis, and that the two are reconciled in the course of events by a synthesis, which in turn calls for a second antithesis because of its continual one-sidedness, and further for a new synthesis which again is not the complete answer to the problem involved.

Prof. Vollenhoven labels his method the problem-historical method. He 1952, p. 142) from the idea that Greek proceeds (cf. *Philsophia Reformata* thought, though progressive, is after all pagan thought with a few polluted remnants or glimmerings of light due to God's common, i.e., restraining, aiding and distributive grace. Kuyper, in imitation of Calvin, calls the history of philosophy the history of apostate thought. But this refers to the connotation of the root and primary principles. It is the task of the Reformed historian of philosophy to define the problems of pagan and other thinkers in the context of their own religious root principles, and then to discover the few primary elements which can be used in the building up of a Christian system after these elements have been cut loose from their pagan foundations and supplemented and purified according to Holy Scripture.

Kuyper illustrated this idea by speaking of a tree whose roots and large branches were of biblical origin, whereas its smaller branches and twigs, which he called secondary or technical priniciples, might be borrowed from unbelievers but could also be originally discovered by Christians. Moreover, though the religious root principles must be exclusively found in Scripture, the branch or primary philosophical principles are found in the borderland of the natural and spiritual realms and therefore are of a double origin. (Bavinck has the same idea. Cf. *Dogmatics*, I, 331 and 472; II, 527 and 528. Cf. Veenhof, *In Kuyper's Lijn.*) We must search for them in nature and Scripture, for, according to Psalm 36:9b, "In thy light we shall see light." Without Scripture these primary principles will remain vague, incorrect, and incomplete.

The Bible, according to Calvin, *roots*, *corrects*, and *supplements* our natural knowledge. Here is the difference between the Thomistic and the Calvinistic way of thinking. Cat and Arminians hold on to the idea Scripture is only a corrective a supplement, but Calvin believes tha Word of God also gives rootage chorage, or a *foundation* for all o (*Institutes*, I, 6.) In other words Bible contains not only religious moral norms, but out of its gold we must dig up proper philosop (or primary) principles. It is from the preface of this volume Prof. Vollenhoven goes on in the of Calvin, that is, in the line of and does not believe in a neutr without qualifications, but in a C tian philosophy from the roots though related to the past thr common grace.

II. New Comment on Antiquit

Another interesting feature of book is that it gives for the first comment in a modern vernacular the so-called *fragments* of the *pre cratic* philosophers. These fragm were published only in 1928, in Gr and in 1934 in Greek and Gern (There is, to be sure, a Dutch tra lation besides Vollenhoven's, w comment by a Catholic scholar Louvain University.) Prof. Vol hoven worked over the fragments many years, and gives accurate ph logical information, according to c petent critics, not only on the appro mately twenty-five major, but also the approximately sixty-five minor Socratic thinkers whose thought c tributed to the development of others and of the later giants, Pl and Aristotle. It may be true that data on the minor philosophers are, the nature of the case, not so "imp tant" for the casual student, there remain the items on men li Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenid Pythagoras and Socrates, not to me tion any more, which are of extrem interest even to non-professionals.

This scholarly work of Prof. Volle hoven, together with Dooyeweerd striking *Transcendental Problems*, a the announcement of a Dutch gover ment grant to publish the latter's thre volumes on the philosophy of the "La Idea" into English (under a new titl may explain why Professors Volle hoven, Popma, and Mekkes we speakers at the International Phil sophical Conference in Brussels the summer of 1953, and why Pro Dooyeweerd was invited by a Cathol congress in France to explain the di

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rence between his position and that the French Thomist Blondel. The new" movement, really the revival f the old Calvinian point of view, now on the world map: Dooyeeerd's first volume has been lauded y humanists in several American agazines.

This, of course, does not mean that alvinists all over the globe must fall n line with all that has been written y these prominent leaders or their llowers. The philosophy of the "Law dea" is an "open" philosophy, acording to its main spokesmen. If any hristian has objection to their sets of anscendentals, i.e., primary ideas, or their further elaborations, let im speak up, for philosophy proper after all speculative and critical in haracter, and Scripture does not conin philosophical *terms* or *formulas.* ut, let us hope that all who wish to be alvinists agree on such *root* principles the ontological, soteriological and smological doctrines of the Trinity, nd further on the doctrine of the nage of God in a twofold sense, the iritual antithesis, and common grace Calvin's sense. These matters ought be cleared up before we can begin discuss purely philosophical quesons such as Scriptural categories of nowledge, spheres or levels of reality, here sovereignty and the cultural ntithesis. We ought to refresh our emories on the religious roots by aking study of our own and other eformed confessions and by turning ur attention to Calvin's wonderful ommentary" on these creeds as found pecially in his *Institutes.* In clarity nd conciseness of expression this latter ork is said to surpass often the rand works of Kuyper and Bavinck. nd on the relation of philosophy and ie Bible Calvin's phraseology is prerred to Article 2 of our Belgic Conssion, for he adds the idea of rootge in Scripture. (Cf. Berkouwer, *eneral Revelation,* Eerdmans, 1955, p. 265-281.)

For all those who are interested in his new work of Prof. Vollenhoven e wish to draw attention to a review y Dr. W. Trap of Wayne University n the *Calvin Forum* of April 1952 on r. Runner's work on Aristotle. This view contains the basic principles of nalysis which Dr. Vollenhoven emloys to classify the approximately inety pre-Socratic philosophers. Dr. unner discusses these principles in a separate chapter of his doctoral thesis. One may differ with the scholarly Vollenhoven, but no one should deny that his schematisms are of an ingenious character, and . . . he may be right after all, as Dr. Trap points out, even if he differs with Aristotle. It is psychological to rebel against something new which is out of the ordinary, but after a little while the newness wears off for anyone who has genuine philosophical ambitions. The Reformation was once something new, and even the philosophical ideas of Calvin never took firm root, for in the seventeenth century the Dutch Reformed theologians turned back to Aquinas and Aristotle! But the tide has turned toward Calvin since the rise of Kuyper's university. Let us have scholarly patience and forbearance with new terms. Out of darkness will come light, for the Sun of righteousness is the Son of God. And let us continue to read. *Veritas vincet.* Truth will conquer! There is progress in God's revelation, and there should also be progress in our search for a Reformed world-view. But let us not forget that many things that look new are in reality of a venerable antiquity, and that Scriptural "primary" philosophical principles must have something to do with Scriptural roots.

Note 1. Philosophy is a search for the primary principles of the cosmos, say Plato and Aristotle. Says Calvin, Philosophy *proper* has to do with *speculation* (*Institutes*, I, 15) on the *workmanship of the cosmos* (commentary on Genesis quoted in *Devotions and Prayers of Calvin*, Baker Book House, 1954, p. 4). Theology and ethics do not belong to this philosophy proper, though most philosophers have expressed themselves on these subjects.

Note 2. For appreciative reviews of Dooyeweerd's *A new Critique of Theoretical Thoughts*, Vol. I, see *Christian Century*, June 2, 1954; *Journal of Religion*, Oct. 1954; and *Review of Metaphysics*, Dec. 1954.

Note 3. Augustine uses the term *paucis mutatis.* But our confessions stand for *paucis retentis pollutis*, "a few remnants wholly polluted." Cf. Haitjema's thesis on Augustine's Epistemology.

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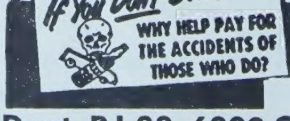

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